



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

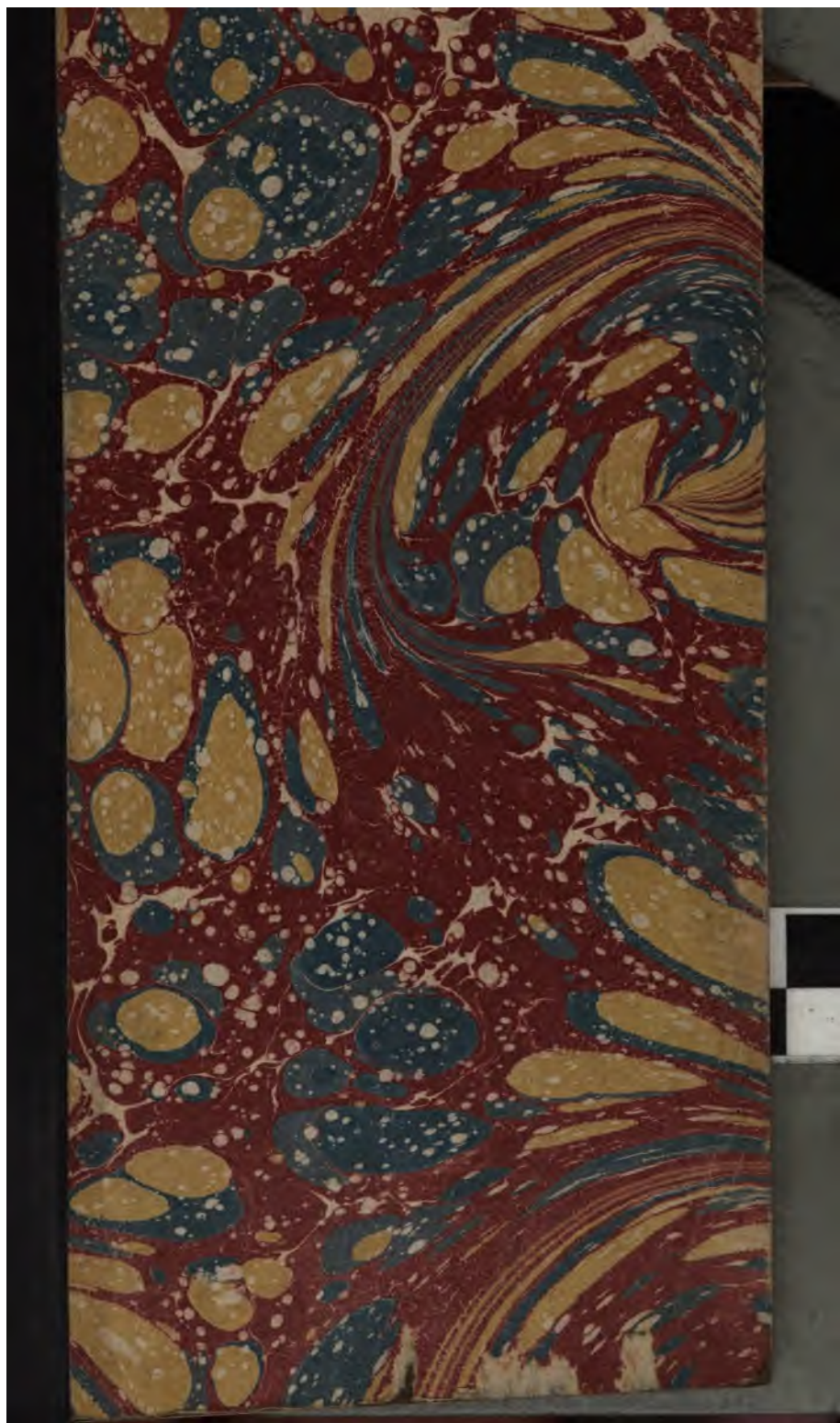
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

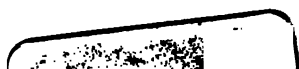
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600099911Z



THE
INCREASE, INFLUENCE,
AND
STABILITY,
OF
UNESTABLISHED RELIGION,
NO CAUSE OF ALARM
TO

Established Christians:

BEING
A REPLY
TO

ARCHDEACON NARES'S CHARGE

*"On the Influence of the Sectaries, and the Stability of
the Church."*

BY JACOB STANLEY.

Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the
end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame. SOLOMON.

Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. PAUL.

WEDNESBURY :

PRINTED AND SOLD BY J. BOOTH.

Sold also by the Author; by T. Blanshard, 14, City Road, London;
Swinney & Ferrall, and Peart & Co. Birmingham; Lomax, Lich-
field; Hall, Worcester; Maurice, Dudley; Chester, Newcastle; and
Rusher, Reading.

1813.

130. e. 57.

46





PREFACE.

THE Author of the following Letters is a decided friend to the free and unfettered discussion of theological subjects ; being persuaded that such discussion, if prosecuted in a christian temper, will tend ultimately to the refutation of error and the establishment of truth.

There are two evils into which controversialists are in danger of being betrayed. The first is, *undue deference to established systems and great names*. The grand subject of enquiry frequently is not so much "What is truth," as how such opinions accord with a certain system, which has been revered for ages, and which has received the sanction of multitudes famed for learning and science? Implicit deference to the supposed wisdom of ancestors, and the perfection of human religious institutions, perpetuated the reign of Popery for many centuries. Nor was it till Luther and his coadjutors in the work of reformation ceased to know any "man after the flesh," and to make their appeal from human authorities to the "law and the testimony," that the manacles of superstition were broken—the anathemas of papal Rome despised—and the common people raised to the high honour of an acquaintance with those "scriptures which are able to make men wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." To correct misrepresentations, and to establish truth, regardless of human authori-

ties, and not to support any human system, is the object of these Letters.

A second evil into which controversialists are apt to fall is, that of *pouring contempt on their opponents*. But let it be remembered *contempt* is not *argument*. Ridicule is not the test of truth. We ought to make a distinction between a man's heart and his arguments. The former may be good, and the latter bad. Many charitable allowances ought also to be made for the influence of education, studies, connexions, situation, interest, &c. In the following Pages, the Author is of opinion that he has detected distorted statements, inconclusive reasoning, untenable positions, and false theology; yet he hopes he has not departed from that courtesy to which a gentleman of such high respectability as Mr. Archdeacon Nares is unquestionably entitled.

The whole is now submitted to the candid investigation and decision of a discerning public, by the

AUTHOR.

Wednesbury, June 25, 1813.

LETTER I.

REVEREND SIR,

It will probably surprise you to receive a series of Letters from one who to you is utterly unknown, and who would not have presumed to address a gentleman of your respectability and rank in the established church, but from a conviction that your late Charge, *On the Influence of Sectaries, and the Stability of the Church*, contains several objectionable positions, which, as far as they are received, are likely to have an unfriendly influence on the interests of Christianity. The custom of delivering charges to the inferior clergy is certainly very laudable; and were these employed in urging scriptural piety, in exciting attention to theological studies, and in promoting the zealous performance of clerical duties, the advantages resulting from them might be incalculable. Ministers would return to their several flocks with a double portion of the spirit of their office; and would call forth all their powers into exercise, and labour for the salvation of their people as those *who must give an account*. Such charges would give an *impetus* to the piety of the church of England, and would eminently tend to the revival and general prevalence of primitive Christianity both among her clergy and laity.

But when these objects are lost sight of, and others of a very different complexion introduced: when a venerable dignitary fills up his hour in panegyrising

his own community, and censuring others—in disturbing the ashes of the dead, who eminently served their generation—in misrepresenting their character, and giving distorted statements of their doctrines and the effects of their ministry—in arrogantly assuming that the church of England is the only true church, and that all who dissent from her cut themselves off from the body of Christ; then, instead of operating to the increase of piety and Christian zeal, their natural tendency is to inflate with ideas of exclusive Christianity, to destroy Christian charity, and to produce contempt of the whole body of Dissenters. Such charges but ill accord with the benevolent temper of the present age—an age in which we behold with pleasure Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Methodists and Independents, Baptists and Quakers, laying aside their peculiar shibboleths, and combining their various influence and talents in giving universal circulation to the word of eternal life.

It is much to be lamented that any one, and especially that a minister of eminence in any Christian community, should attempt to disturb this harmony. This, however, has frequently been done by two classes of ministers of very opposite characters. The first appear to be influenced in their opposition to dissenters solely from a concern for their spiritual interests. They consider them as having wandered from the fold of Christ, and as being in great danger of losing their souls; and therefore they affectionately strive to reclaim them. Opposition from such men, dissenters regard with much affection. They know they love them, and mean

nothing but their good; and though their arguments may fail in producing conviction, their temper is sure to gain their hearts, and to produce regret that they are under the necessity of opposing the sentiments of men possessing so much excellence, and with whom they hope to dwell forever in that state where we shall no longer *see through a glass darkly, but face to face*; no longer *know but in part, but shall know even as we are known*. The second class appear to be less solicitous for the salvation of dissenters than for the security and honour of the established church. Hence their language to dissenters is not the language of pity, but contempt. They are exhibited as weak and designing men: volleys of abuse are poured forth; and they are stigmatized as fanatics and hypocrites, or, what, in their estimation, appears to include every other evil, Methodists. I am sorry, Sir, that in your opposition to dissenters you appear to me to bear a far more striking resemblance to the latter than to the former of these classes. You will therefore excuse the liberty which I have taken in offering a few free remarks on several particulars contained in your Charge.

A friend of mine presented me with a copy of it, on a late visit to the city of Lichfield. Learning from the title page that you are not only an archdeacon, but that you also are M. A. F. R. S. and F. A. S., I entered upon its perusal with considerable expectations. Indeed, Sir, I began to read with that profound veneration which I generally feel for intellectual beings above the ordinary stature, among whom my

imagination had already placed you. Perhaps I expected too much. Disappointment met me in almost every page. I however travelled through the record, and in conclusion could not help suspecting that there is some mystery in academical honours and clerical preferments.

You begin your charge by eulogizing the church of England, which you describe as being "the most pure and apostolical form of Christianity in the world;" which church "it has pleased God should always be surrounded with enemies;" but from which circumstance you suppose it probable much good will result.

That the church of England is the *most apostolical form of Christianity*, is not by any means a new assertion: but it should be remembered that a thousand assertions unaccompanied by evidence will never produce rational conviction. They may, and no doubt will influence the belief of the multitude; but on the thoughtful and intelligent they produce a very different effect: they excite suspicion that the thing cannot be supported by evidence, or betray a poverty of information in the assertor.

To prove the church of England apostolical in her form, it is not enough to shew that there is some agreement between her doctrines and those of the apostles; for what sect cannot do this? Say the church of England is, as you suppose her to be, Arminian in her doctrines: the Remonstrants formerly, and the Wesleyan Methodists now are Arminians also. Say she is what Mr. Scott, the antagonist of Dr. Tomlyne, and thousands more believe her to be, Calvinistic: there

are hundreds of congregations in this country, on the continent, and in America, avowedly so. In order to prove the church of England "apostolical in her form," you must not only prove an agreement in her *doctrines*, but also an agreement in her *officers*—an agreement in her *forms of worship*—and an agreement in her *discipline*. But you have not done this. No : you have not even attempted it. Were it fully admitted that she is apostolical in her doctrines, it would not necessarily follow that she is so in her officers also. Can you furnish us with a list of the *arch-bishops*, *arch-deacons*, *deans*, *prebendaries*, *proctors*, *rectors*, *vicars*, and *curates* of the apostolical church, or produce a single evidence of any one of these orders having existed in the apostolical age ? You know you cannot. And yet all these are officers in the church of England. Where then is the resemblance ? It is as perfect as the resemblance between Prince Henry and Falstaff's men in buckram.

But to constitute a church apostolical, "there should not only be a resemblance in the *names* of office, but also in the *character* of her officers. "My kingdom, (said the Redeemer) is not of this world." The several officers employed by earthly sovereigns may be good or bad men, without disqualifying them for office ; but it is not so in the church of Christ. A wicked man may command our fleets and armies—a swearer may be employed as an ambassador to foreign courts—a sensualist may be a minister of state : but nothing of this can be admitted among the officers in the church of Christ. They must be "good men, full of the holy

Ghost and of faith." Admit *bad* men into the ministry, and you at once lose *all* resemblance to the officers of the apostolical church; for these were "patterns of good works: in doctrine *showing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, and sound speech, that could not be condemned."

As in the apostolical age certain qualifications were essentially necessary to the office of the ministry, without which no one was admitted into that office, it will inevitably follow that in those communities, where such qualifications are not insisted on as at all essential, and where free admission can be obtained without them, there is, at least in this particular, a total want of resemblance. You may call men *bishops* or *deacons*; but unless they have the qualifications essential to these offices, they no more resemble apostolical bishops and deacons than an idiot resembles a philosopher, or a knave an honest man. And to suppose that such persons will watch over men for their spiritual edification is as palpable an absurdity as to suppose that a hungry wolf would become the protector of sheep, or a shark the guardian angel of its prey.

St. Paul, in the third chapter of his first epistle to Timothy, has distinctly stated the qualifications necessary for these offices. He has not, indeed, said any thing about the qualifications of Archbishops, Archdeacons, Deans, and the other officers belonging to the English hierarchy. These appear to have been utterly unknown to the "apostolical form of Christianity:" but these, to constitute a resemblance, you

will of course admit, should *all* be men of *good report*. But is this the case? That it includes many excellent men, is not denied; but it is a lamentable fact, and too notorious to be concealed, that it also includes ministers of a very opposite character, who are a reproach, not only to the Christian ministry, but to the Christian name, who are nevertheless permitted to continue in office. And is that church which tacitly sanctions evils in her ministers, which the apostles would have punished by excommunication in her members, to be held up as the *most pure and apostolical form of Christianity in the world*? The attempt is ludicrous; for were a resemblance in constitution admitted, there is a complete opposition in practice.*

* Not long since a most disgraceful circumstance occurred at ——— in ———. The Rev. Mr. ——— was so completely intoxicated, that he could not read his sermon. He had no sooner read his text, than he fell forward upon the cushion. When he recovered his erect posture, he attempted to proceed, but could not. He then talked to the congregation about an election for a minister which was to take place at a neighbouring town early in the week, and exhorted them to give their votes and influence in favour of the Rev. Mr. ———. Several of the congregation began to leave the church, which when he perceived, he exclaimed, "Pay your shot first, I tell you, and then you may all go." Had this been the first instance of delinquency in the life of this gentleman, no blame whatever could have been attached to the church on account thereof; for the apostolical church itself had its delinquents: but when wickedness is systematic, and continued in for years; and when those whose office it is to exercise discipline on the clergy, after knowing the fact, connive at such offences, and permit such offenders to continue in the ministry, then the evil becomes entirely chargeable to the discipline, or rather to the want of discipline in the national church. This want of discipline is deeply deplored by the pious members of the church of England, both clergy and laity. It is confidently said that application for the removal of this notoriously immoral minister was made some time since to his bishop, who returned for answer that he belonged to the Dead of ———, and therefore could not interfere. The dean was applied to, who said he had nothing to do with him; but referred them to his diocesan. So he is permitted to continue, to the disgrace of the Christian ministry, to the encouragement of vice, and to the grief of every pious mind in the neighbourhood.

I would say of eulogy what a late ingenious writer has said of ornaments. "*Eulogy* becomes none except the handsome. To all others *eulogy* only attracts people's eyes to behold infirmity and ugliness."

But when you describe the church of England as the *most pure and apostolical form of christianity*, you perhaps refer not so much to her ministry, as to her *form*, or *manner* of worship. That there is much resemblance here will not readily be believed, till it be proved that formularies of devotion were used in the apostolical churches—that in those formularies baptism and regeneration were terms of the same import—that they acknowledged other priests besides Christ—that in baptism they signed with the sign of the cross—that they consecrated the bread and wine in the eucharist—that they had an altar, and knelt before it—that they repeated a creed aloud, and turned their faces towards the east—and that the minister read prayers in a surplice, and preached in a gown.

In the preceding observations I have endeavoured to avoid exaggeration, and aimed at a plain statement of truth; after the examination of which your readers may judge of the exact agreement between the worship of the church of England and that of the apostles.

I remain,

Reverend Sir,

Your Servant in the cause of truth,

J. STANLEY.

LETTER II.

REFEREND SIR,

YOU profess to believe the church of England to be "the most perfect form of Christianity," to be "enlightened by the faith, and strengthened by the blood of martyrs," "founded upon the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner stone;" "and as to human security, supported by the laws of the land, and connected with the most vital parts of the constitution:"* yet, somewhat inconsistently, you seem, though you affect to conceal your fears, to apprehend dreadful things from a combination of Methodists against it. "Our church," you say, "circumstanced as I have described it, has once been overthrown by a sect in many respects resembling the Methodists, by the Puritans."† The excesses of those times are certainly much to be lamented; but they were very few in comparison with those which have in general attended national revolutions.

But what were those Puritans? Persons without religious principles, or whose principles were so accommodating as always to yield to the will of their superiors? Persons over whom the pride and emolument of office had such absolute influence as utterly to silence the voice of conscience, and, if not to annihilate, at least, throw the moral sense into a profound sleep? No: they were men in general of unconquer-

* Page 2.

† Page 3.

able virtue—men who could not be prevailed upon to act contrary to principle either by the smiles or frowns of princes—men who opposed the exercise of arbitrary power by those enemies to the liberties of Britains, the first James, and the first Charles, whilst their persecutors, the bishops, laboured to enslave the nation—men who, rather than pollute their consciences by the sacrifice of principle, either to acquire or retain honourable and lucrative offices, renounced every earthly prospect, and submitted to the severest sufferings, and the deepest degradation—men, but for whom the constitution, which is now the admiration of the world, would have been lost in an absolute tyranny, and popery, with all its absurdities, superstitions and cruelties, inevitably introduced—and men who, whilst the names of their persecutors will be written in the dust, or held up to endless execration, shall, like the just, be had in everlasting remembrance. The Methodists, Sir, you highly honour by such a resemblance: they, I trust, will not be ashamed of their glory.

But these, it seems, overthrew the church. That they, in common with the great majority of the thinking part of the community, approved of that act of the great council of the nation which abolished episcopal government, is not denied. And had not the church of England already overthrown the church of Rome? thus furnishing an example of schism and precedent in the work of reformation. But the church of England had reasons to justify her conduct. And the Puritans also had reasons to justify their's. The prelacy of those

times were generally devoted to the establishment of an absolute tyranny. Both James and Charles ardently thirsted for unlimited power and authority, and they had studied human nature sufficiently to be convinced that episcopacy was more friendly to such despotism than any popular form of church government. The king cried up the bishops, and the bishops in their turn cried up the king, and both agreed in crying down the just liberties of the subject. The principal bishops were cringing sycophants of the sovereign,* and the most inexorable persecutors of the people;|| and to their abominable intolerance must entirely be ascribed the demolition of the hierarchy in that age.

* At the celebrated conference between the Bishops and Puritans, held by the appointment of King James the first, at Hampton-Court, in which there were nine bishops and as many dignitaries of the church on the one side, and only four Puritan ministers on the other, in which James also took a considerable part on the side of episcopacy, Whitgift, archbishop of Canterbury said, "That undoubtedly his majesty spoke by the special assistance of God's Spirit;" and Bancroft, bishop of ——— falling on his knees, with his eyes raised to—James, expressed himself thus: "I protest my heart melteth for joy, that Almighty God, of his singular mercy, has given us such a king, as since Christ's time has not been." Yes, my lord, a blessed and most gracious king—a Daniel, a second Daniel. But what would my lord of Canterbury, or his brother Bancroft have said, had they heard him in the year 1590 make the following declaration in a general assembly held at Edinburgh? "I praise God that I was born in the time of the light of the gospel, and in such a place, as to be the king of the sincerest (i. e. purest) kirk in the world. The kirk of GENEVA keep pasche and yule (i. e. Easter and Christmas.) What have they for them? They have no institution. As for our neighbour kirk of ENGLAND, their service is an evil said mass in English; they want nothing of the mass, but the liftings (i. e. the elevation of the host.) I charge you, my good minieters, doctours, elders, nobles, gentlemen, and barons, to stand to your purity, and to exhort your people to do the same; and I, forsooth, as long as I brook my life, shall do the same."

Calderwood's History of the Church of Scotland, p. 256.

|| See the cases of Prynne, Smart, and Dr. Leighton, in Atmore's edition of Dr. S. Chandler's *History of Persecution*, pp. 330—338.

The church, however, you say, "let us remember, fell only with the state," from which you seem to hope they always will be co-existent. Should your views on this subject be correct, dissenters in general, being convinced of the excellence of the British constitution, would be ready to exclaim, *Let the church of England live forever!* But that the existence of the state depends on its alliance with the church, is a fact much more easily asserted than proved. Be this as it may, the church of England, you acknowledge, depends for its existence upon the *state*: it is "supported by the laws of the land, and connected with the most vital parts of the constitution."* And is *that* church which is the "most perfect form of Christianity" dependant on human laws for its support? This was not the form of the church in the apostolical age. *Then* the kingdom of Christ was not of this world; *then* Christianity, like a stately vessel, with her canvass unfurled, sailed majestically, without being towed along by any human cock-boat; *then* she was not a compound of iron and clay, like the toes in Nebuchadnezzar's vision, as indeed she is now represented, but a mass of fine gold; *then* she flourished like the tall cedars of Lebanon, nor needed support or security from the surrounding underwood. To assert the dependance of the Christian church on any human being or institution, is to libel it. Such a church resembles a house built upon the sand, which may be destroyed by the caprice of a tyrant, or by the turbulent clamours of the mob, but bears no resem-

* Page 2.

blance to that church against which the *gates of hell cannot prevail*.

But the Puritans, it seems, were *hypocrites* and *fanatics*; and as the Methodists in "many respects resemble them," it is but natural to suppose that they also have a little tinge of *fanaticism* and *hypocrisy*—not a few of them only, but the body at large; for the Puritans, whom you represent as the archetype of the Methodists, you characterize as hypocrites and fanatics, not in their individual, but in their collective character. But will you seriously undertake to prove these charges against the Methodists? Do this, and they will be execrated by the public. As soon as this is accomplished, Methodism will have reached "its height," and the monster will sicken and die. But if instead of proofs you deal in mere declamation and reiterated assertions, Methodism, instead of coming "to nought," will probably proceed in a ratio equally great with that which has hitherto marked its progress. To say nothing of the increase of Methodism in the late Mr. Whitfield's connexion, what think you of its increase among the followers of Mr. Wesley? You may rely on the correctness of the following statement, which may perhaps assist you in your conjectures on the probable duration of Methodism. The number of members in society was in the year

1772.....	31983
1782.....	46331
1792.....	147067
1802.....	207308
1812.....	367401

The increase during the first ten years was 14348
 the second ditto 100736
 the third ditto 60941
 the fourth ditto 160093

From this statement it appears that the increase during the last ten years exceeds eleven times the number added during the first ten : "and possibly it is not yet at its height." No : the sun has scarcely risen above the horizon : it will continue to shine, and to shine with increasing brightness, until the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. Few, it is presumed, after reading this statement, will say with you, "that, like other works of man, when it shall have produced its natural effects by natural means, it will come to nought."*

You appear to approve of the religious plan which was adopted in Oxford by the Wesleys and others. "These beginnings, you say, as far as they are recorded, appear to have been very laudable." But you seem to think their zeal led them much too far ; for they "soon assumed some outward appearance of formality and rigour, something that made them the subject of public observation and remark, and gave rise to the appellation of Methodist."† The fact is, they abstained not only from evil, but from its appearance—attended church and sacrament regularly—read and studied the scriptures, especially the Greek Testament—fasted and prayed—visited prisoners in the castle—and instructed and relieved the

* Page 4. † Page 5, 6.

poor and the afflicted. Yes, these were their complicated crimes : they were "righteous over much;" and therefore were treated with ridicule by other members of the university, against whom no such charges could be substantiated.

"In the year 1735," you say, "John and Charles Wesley had imbibed so much of enthusiastic zeal, that, quitting all prospects in their own country, they embarked for Georgia, to preach the gospel to the American Indians."* *Enthusiastic zeal*; that is to say, *fanatical, irrational zeal*. But what are the proofs that their zeal was of this description? O, there are two, and two most potent ones. The *first* is, their "quitting all prospects in their own country"—all prospects of clerical promotion. They were men of learning and talents, especially John Wesley. He was also a man of much application and perseverance; and it is at least possible that, had he tarried at home, and kept his religion within moderate bounds, he might per chance, by the aid of a patron, have passed through the various gradations of clerical office, till, like you, Sir, he might have been designated *The Rev. the Archdeacon*. And if in that situation he had affected much zeal, not *enthusiastic*, but *rational zeal*, for the established church, and published charges against dissenters, it is not the most improbable conjecture that was ever offered, that in due time he might even have worn the mitre. The *second* proof of their zeal being *enthusiastic* is, their embarking "for Georgia,

to preach the gospel to the American Indians." What man in his right mind would ever have done this? To embark at all, how foolish! By so doing they quitted all prospects in their own country, tore themselves from their kindred and acquaintance, and exposed themselves to the danger of a watery grave! *Then*, to embark for *such* a purpose! Had it been to collect gold as the dust, and silver as the sand of the sea, their zeal would have been rational; but to go to America to *preach the gospel*! Who but madmen would ever have done so? And *then*, to preach the gospel to *Indians*! Surely they must have been enthusiasts *indeed* to trouble themselves at all about the souls of Indians!

Ah, Sir, and can you deliberately, in a precomposed address to your clergy, many of whom, instead of being in danger from too much zeal, possess a death-like apathy on divine subjects—can you deliberately mark the apostolical zeal of those men of God with the opprobrious epithet—*enthusiastic*? A zeal which had for its object, not personal aggrandizement, but the glory of God, and the eternal salvation of myriads of immortal beings—a zeal which, like the apostle's, exposed them to perils by land, perils by water, and perils among false brethren—and a zeal which led them without a sigh to sacrifice the friendship, honour, and pleasures of the world, and not to "count their lives dear unto themselves, so that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Would St. Paul, Sir, have consi-

dered this an evil deserving of reprobation? No : he would not have reproved the *zeal*, but the *supineness* of ministers of the present age. And had any of the ministers been accused of being too zealous, instead of damping that zeal by censure, he would have increased its action by commendation ; and in justification of what might appear eccentricity to frozen-hearted formalists and “gentle theologues,” he would probably have said, “Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God ; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause : for the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead : and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”* On the subject of Christian zeal, the apostle Paul and his *successor*, the reverend the archdeacon of Stafford, appear to be completely at issue. The one proclaims that “it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing,” and furnishes an illustration of the truth of his doctrine, by “warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom ;” and especially by preaching, at the expense of ease and reputation, “the unsearchable riches of Christ among the Gentiles ;” whereas the other furnishes no such example ; but on the contrary, designates Christian zeal *enthusiastic* ; and in justification of such designation, tells his clergy that the Wesleys had “quitted all prospects in their

* 2 Cor. v. 13—15.

own country, and embarked for Georgia, to preach the gospel to the American Indians !!!”

Wishing Christians universally, and ministers of the gospel in particular, an abundant increase of Christian zeal,

I remain,

Reverend Sir,

Your's in the cause of truth,

J. STANLEY.

LETTER III.

REVEREND SIR,

WHEN I read the following words : " About this time arose a circumstance so remarkable as to be, in my opinion, almost decisive of the whole question,"* I rejoiced in hope of " new light." I said to myself, what can this be which is at once to determine whether Methodism *is* or is *not* of God ? I read on, and found it to be neither more nor less than that Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitfield did not agree in opinion on the subject of Universal Redemption. Sir, I acknowledge my obligation for " new light," for till now I never understood, nor even imagined that such a question could be determined by such a circumstance. But we live and learn. But by what rational process do you attempt to prove such difference of opinion to be conclusive against Methodism's being of God ? You tell us that, " Had these men been contented to be received as mere human teachers, there would have been nothing uncommon or extraordinary in such a difference of opinion. But, as both chose afterward to assume the style and manner of the apostles ; as they pretended, and perhaps in their enthusiasm sometimes believed, that their thoughts, words, and many of their most trivial actions were suggested by

able virtue—men who could not be prevailed upon to act contrary to principle either by the smiles or frowns of princes—men who opposed the exercise of arbitrary power by those enemies to the liberties of Britains, the first James, and the first Charles, whilst their persecutors, the bishops, laboured to enslave the nation—men who, rather than pollute their consciences by the sacrifice of principle, either to acquire or retain honourable and lucrative offices, renounced every earthly prospect, and submitted to the severest sufferings, and the deepest degradation—men, but for whom the constitution, which is now the admiration of the world, would have been lost in an absolute tyranny, and popery, with all its absurdities, superstitions and cruelties, inevitably introduced—and men who, whilst the names of their persecutors will be written in the dust, or held up to endless execration, shall, like the just, be had in everlasting remembrance. The Methodists, Sir, you highly honour by such a resemblance : they, I trust, will not be ashamed of their glory.

But these, it seems, overthrew the church. That they, in common with the great majority of the thinking part of the community, approved of that act of the great council of the nation which abolished episcopal government, is not denied. And had not the church of England already overthrown the church of Rome? thus furnishing an example of schism and precedent in the work of reformation. But the church of England had reasons to justify her conduct. And the Puritans also had reasons to justify their's. The prelacy of those

times were generally devoted to the establishment of an absolute tyranny. Both James and Charles ardently thirsted for unlimited power and authority, and they had studied human nature sufficiently to be convinced that episcopacy was more friendly to such despotism than any popular form of church government. The king cried up the bishops, and the bishops in their turn cried up the king, and both agreed in crying down the just liberties of the subject. The principal bishops were cringing syzophants of the sovereign,* and the most inexorable persecutors of the people;|| and to their abominable intolerance must entirely be ascribed the demolition of the hierarchy in that age.

* At the celebrated conference between the Bishops and Puritans, held by the appointment of King James the first, at Hampton-Court, in which there were nine bishops and as many dignitaries of the church on the one side, and only four Puritan ministers on the other, in which James also took a considerable part on the side of episcopacy, Whitgift, archbishop of Canterbury said, "That undoubtedly his majesty spoke by the special assistance of God's Spirit;" and Bancroft, bishop of ——— falling on his knees, with his eyes raised to—James, expressed himself thus: "I protest my heart melteth for joy, that Almighty God, of his singular mercy, has given us such a king, as since Christ's time has not been." Yes, my lord, a blessed and most gracious king—a Daniel, a second Daniel. But what would my lord of Canterbury, or his brother Bancroft have said, had they heard him in the year 1590 make the following declaration in a general assembly held at Edinburgh? "I praise God that I was born in the time of the light of the gospel, and in such a place, as to be the king of the sincerest (i. e. purest) kirk in the world. The kirk of GENEVA keep pasche and yule (i. e. Easter and Christmas.) What have they for them? They have no institution. As for our neighbour kirk of ENGLAND, their service is an evil said mass in English; they want nothing of the mass, but the liftings (i. e. the elevation of the host.) I charge you, my good ministers, doctours, elders, nobles, gentlemen, and barons, to stand to your purity, and to exhort your people to do the same; and I, forsooth, as long as I brook my life, shall do the same."

Calderwood's History of the Church of Scotland, p. 256.

|| See the cases of Prynne, Smart, and Dr. Leighton, in Atmore's edition of Dr. S. Chandler's *History of Persecution*, pp. 330—338.

preach the gospel?" Ought not God to be obeyed rather than man? A man who, like you, has been *thus* moved, should, whilst he has breath, persist in preaching the "glorious gospel of the blessed God," in utter defiance of the edicts of princes, the decrees of councils, the bulls of popes, or the anathemas of bigots.

The venerable men whom you condemn, were, through the intolerance of their opposers, placed in very difficult circumstances. They had been bred in the bosom of the church of England, and educated for her ministry. Their prejudices also were strong in her favour. In her communion they wished to live and die. But "a dispensation of the gospel had been committed" to them, and therefore when hindered from preaching where they *would*, they preached where they *could*. I am very far from thinking that every clergyman would do so; for rather than depart from clerical regularity, especially if such departure annihilated "all prospects" of clerical promotion "in this country," many, it is to be feared, though they have solemnly declared themselves to be "moved by the Holy Ghost" to preach the gospel, would preach no more as long as sun or moon endures. They, however, with their views and feelings could not remain silent. The word of the Lord was as fire in their bones: they went out into the highways and hedges, inviting sinners to the marriage feast, and thousands accepted of the invitation. And did they do wrong? To assert they did is easy; but to prove it is impossible.

That they did wrong you assert, and attempt to

prove it thus: "If, as may, and often has been proved, the discipline of our church is derived from the practice and appointment of the apostles, and stands, therefore, on inspired authority, no reasonable person can admit of a commission to disobey and disturb that discipline, under a less evidence than that of miracles."* That there were bishops and deacons in the apostolical church we know; but that there were priests we have no more evidence than that there were cyclops. Besides, bishops in the apostolical church were very different from what they are in the English church. Whether a bishop was the stated pastor or overseer of a particular flock, I shall not at present discuss; but this we know, that he was one who *preached the word*—was *instant in season and out of season*—did the *work of an evangelist*, and made *full proof of his ministry*.† But do Church-of-England bishops make full proof of *their* ministry? Are *they* instant in season and out of season in preaching the word? Is it not a fact that a sermon from a bishop is now a perfect rarity? The name is indeed retained, but the office has changed its character.||

* Page 11.

† 2 Tim. ii. 5.

|| Pious and zealous ministers in the established church have long lamented that bishops preach so little. Bishop Latimer in his day saw and deplored the evil. His language on the occasion is remarkably striking: "O that a man might have the contemplation of hell—that the devil would allow a man to look into hell, to see the state of it! If one were admitted to view hell thus, and, beholding it thoroughly, the devil should say, On yonder side are punished UNPREACHING PRELATES; I think a man should see as far as a kenning, and perceive nothing but UNPREACHING PRELATES: he might look as far as CALAIS, I warrant you."

Vol. 1. SERMON 8.

When I read the above passage, it reminded me of an observation which Mr. Whiston used frequently to make upon bishop Gibson, "That he seemed to think the *church of England*, as it just then happened to be established by modern laws and customs, came down from heaven with the Athanasian creed in its hand." In your opinion, Sir, she is all fair; there is no spot in her: yea, her very discipline is by inspiration, and therefore cannot be disobeyed or disturbed "under a less evidence than that of miracles." Now, Sir, I beg leave to collate this passage with one which occurs in page 9, and then to ask a question: there you say, "It is certain, beyond all reasonable doubt, that the apostles, established one uniform mode of discipline in all the churches which they planted; the same, or nearly the same, as that which was reverently preserved in all churches till the reformation." Now, Sir, the question I would ask on the collation of these two passages, is this: By what "evidence of miracles" do members of the church of England justify themselves in disobeying and disturbing the discipline of the church of Rome, seeing that in that church the *inspired discipline* was "reverently preserved?" They must either justify their secession from the church of Rome, by the "evidence of miracles," or, the arch-deacon of Stafford being judge, they are "unreasonable persons." But as no miracles are pretended, the conclusion is inevitable.

Nor is this all; for it seems they also by "separating themselves from the unity of the church, pro-

nounce a sentence of excommunication against themselves, and cease to be members of Christ's body."* This is awful indeed! Who could have supposed that a protestant clergyman of the nineteenth century would have pronounced Luther and Melancthon, Cranmer and Ridley, with all the ministers and members of the reformed churches, in a "state of schism," and in danger of perdition? It is true you apply your observations to Wesley, Whitfield, and others who have either partially or wholly dissented from the church of England: but it is also true that they are *equally* applicable to all churchmen; for they have *disobeyed and disturbed* that church in which, according to your account, Sir, the *apostolical discipline was reverently preserved*; and therefore they are in a "state of schism," and "incur a hazard, which every prudent, and much more every pious person should be careful to avoid." Should the Rev. Peter Gandolphy read your charge, I expect he would soon send you a *congratulatory letter on your zealous defence of the ancient discipline*; with, perhaps, an expostulatory postscript on the inconsistency of continuing a minister of a schismatical church. And were he to do this, you would find yourself reduced to this dilemma, either to reason on *noncon*, that is to say, schismatical principles, (for in your vocabulary they seem to be terms of the same import) or otherwise to enter within the pale of the *holy catholic, and apostolic church*.

It will admit of serious question whether there *was*

* Page 34.

uniformity of discipline *even* in the apostolical churches. But if this were granted, it would still remain to be proved that the same discipline, and *no other*, was intended to be binding on all Christian churches in every age and country, and that, by departing from this, persons would "incur a hazard" of losing their souls. That Christians should associate for pious purposes, and especially for the worship of Almighty God, and that some should preach the gospel, and watch over the spiritual concerns of the people, are obvious facts; but that there should be the distinct orders of bishop, priest, and deacon, with the several other officers belonging to the hierarchy—that no man should be permitted to preach without episcopal ordination—that no ground is fit for the interment of the *dead*, nor any building fit for the religious worship of the *living*, till *consecrated* by a bishop—that every church must have thirty-nine articles and a formulary of devotion, to *all* and *every* thing contained in which every minister must subscribe *ex amino*, &c., are not so obvious. The probability is, that the mode of discipline is arbitrary, and to be determined by the local circumstances of the Christian church.

You give us "an instance of Mr. Wesley's being excluded from a church," assign a reason for such exclusion, and conclude the cause thereof to be even worse than was pretended by his clerical persecutor.* Why was he excluded? For his doctrine. What was his doctrine? He asserted "that a man might

* Page 14.

be harmless, might use the means of grace, and do much good, and yet have no true religion at all." And what is there wrong here? Is not all this perfectly orthodox? Yes, Dr. W. of Exeter cathedral, you say, did not object to it because he thought it "unsound, but because it was not guarded; was dangerous, and might lead people into enthusiasm and despair." You, however, dissent from the Dr. on this subject. You are of opinion that though it is true "that Christians may abstain from evil on worldly motives only; may use the appointed means of grace without due reflection, or any feeling of their true import; and may give alms, and do other good works, through vanity, or with reliance on them, as *meriting* salvation in themselves, which cannot be true of any human acts; and that all these things being supposed, such persons certainly would have no true religion;" yet that all this was unsound as delivered by Wesley. How true is it that in some instances it is safer for one man to steal a horse than for another to look over the hedge! Here are three propositions, all true as proceeding from the Rev. the archdeacon of Stafford, but all false as uttered by Wesley!!!

But why do you suppose the doctrine of Mr. Wesley to have been unsound? The text was, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Very well, and what then? Why, "Can there be a doubt with any person who knows the style of that preacher, that he slightly passed over, or otherwise explained the first requisition of "righteousness," and laid the whole

proof of belonging to the kingdom of God on that inward feeling of 'peace and joy in the Holy Ghost,' without which, in his idea, there was no salvation to those who should perform even the most perfect service, according to the terms of the gospel?" But why deal in supposition? Why not give us Mr. Wesley's own words, and then, if you can, prove them to contain false doctrine? This would be much more fair and ingenuous than dealing in hypothetical inuendos. But what *you* ought to have done *I* shall with much deference do for you.

Mr. Wesley says, "Sunday, Nov. 25, 1739, I preached at St. Mary's, (Exeter) on, *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* Dr. W—— told me after sermon, 'Sir, you must not preach in the afternoon. Not,' said he, 'that you preach any false doctrine: I allow all that you have said is true. And it is the doctrine of the church of England; but it is not guarded; it may lead people into enthusiasm or despair.'

"I did not readily see where the stress of this objection, so frequently started, lay. But upon a little reflection, I saw it plain. The real state of the case is this: Religion is commonly thought to consist of three things: harmlessness, using the means of grace, and doing good, as it is called; that is, helping our neighbours, chiefly by giving alms. Accordingly, by a religious man is commonly meant, one that is honest, just, and fair in his dealings; that is constantly at church and sacrament; and that gives much alms, or, as it is usually termed, does much good.

"Now in explaining those words of the apostle, *The kingdom of God* (or true religion, the consequence of God's dwelling and reigning in the soul) *is not meat and drink*, I was necessarily led to shew that religion does not properly consist in any or all of these three things; but that a man might both be harmless, use the means of grace, and do much good, and yet have no true religion at all. And sure it is, had God then impressed this great truth on any who before were ignorant of it, that impression would have occasioned such heaviness in his soul as the world always terms *despair*.

"Again, in explaining those words, *The kingdom of God* (or true religion) *is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, I insisted that every follower of Christ ought to expect and pray for that *peace of God which passeth all understanding, that rejoicing in hope of the glory of God*, which is even now *unspeakable and full of glory*; and above all, as being the very life and soul of religion, without which it is all dead show, the *love of God shed abroad in his heart, by the Holy Ghost given unto him*."*

Thus far Mr. Wesley. And can you disprove a single position contained in the above extract? If you can, let it be done; if not, cease to oppose, lest you should be found fighting against God. But it seems you are offended with Mr. Wesley for teaching that without the "inward feeling of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, there is no salvation to those who

* Wesley's Works, vol. 2, pp. 8, 9.

perform even the most perfect service, according to the terms of the gospel. But where or when did he teach any such doctrine? Mr. Wesley understood Christianity better than to utter such jargon. In "his idea" these were inseparable. With him the performance of the conditions of the gospel, and the possession of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, were always associated. The principal term, or condition of the gospel, is faith in Christ: "This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent." Mr. Wesley taught this uniformly; and maintained with St. Paul, that "being justified by faith, we have PEACE with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we also JOY in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."*

If, therefore, in the terms or conditions of the gospel, you include faith, that faith which is of the operation of God's Spirit, which justifies the ungodly, and is the substance of things hoped for, you are exceedingly incorrect in asserting that Mr. Wesley taught that a man may "perform the most perfect service according to the terms of the gospel," and yet be destitute of "the *inward feeling of peace and joy* in the Holy Ghost." What God had joined together, he did not put asunder.

* Rom. v. 1, 2—11.

LETTER III.

31

**That all who name the name of Christ may comply
with the terms of the gospel, and enjoy its promises, is
the sincere prayer of,**

Reverend Sir,

Your's in the cause of truth,

J. STANLEY.

LETTER IV.

REFEREND SIR,

ON what you call the “doctrine of inward feelings,” you write with peculiar energy, and plainly indicate that you are not destitute of *feeling*. But as your energy is not in favour of, but against *religious* feeling, you will, no doubt, escape the suspicion of enthusiasm, and be ranked among *rational* Christians.

By “inward feelings” you obviously intend what has generally been denominated *religious feelings*: such as religious fear, hope, sorrow, joy, desire, aversion, &c. These you call “dangerous,” and “fatal,” tending either to produce “a foolish, enthusiastic, and ill-founded confidence and presumption,” otherwise black “despair.” You indeed admit that “God can assuredly influence our inward feelings if he think fit,” but suppose this is seldom or rather never the case in our day, for such influences are “miraculous impressions,” and who does not know that the age of miracles is past? These feelings must therefore be considered as under the influence of causes purely physical—governed particularly “by the state of the health and constitution; and by that inexplicable result of the action of the nervous system, called *animal spirits*.”

Religious feelings you represent as the effervescence of enthusiasm. But ought they to be thus

represented? Are the passions, ever active on ordinary subjects, to be quiescent only on the great subject of religion? Are our fears to be alive to temporal, but not to spiritual danger? Are our hopes to be called into exercise by the prospect of the riches, or honours, or pleasures of this transitory state, and to remain uninfluenced by the promise of "eternal life?"

- Is our love to burn with ardour towards a fellow-creature, and shall we contemplate with a frigid apathy the uncreated excellence of Deity? Shall we feel grateful to an earthly benefactor, and remain destitute of this feeling towards our Divine Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, who has crowned our lives with his goodness? When visited with affliction and loss, shall we mourn and lament: but when we have lost our innocence by transgression, and subjected ourselves to the *bitter pains of eternal death*, remain utterly unmoved? Or, finally, shall a criminal on receiving the royal pardon be overwhelmed with joy; and shall not a sinner exult in the word of Divine reconciliation? If man be a creature capable of "inward feelings," their action should be in proportion to the exciting cause: and if so, they should be much more alive to the concerns of eternity, than to those of this life; for the disproportion between these is infinitely greater than that which exists between a drop and the ocean—an atom of dust and all the matter in the universe.

Besides, to separate religion from "inward feelings," is absolutely to destroy it. For religion does not consist in mere "bodily exercise"—in the outward per-

formance of certain moral, or even religious duties. A hypocrite might perform all these. Neither does it consist in the cold assent of the understanding to certain revealed truths; for some of the worst characters under heaven do this. Yes, drunkards and thieves, blasphemers and adulterers, assent to the doctrine of Christ. That religion is not *apart* from the understanding and practice, Mr. Wesley contended as strongly as any man; but he did not confine it to these—he extended it to the heart. It comprises right principles, right feelings, and right actions. The sacred writers designate religion the *fear* and *love* of God. St. Paul calls it *living* and *walking in the Spirit*; and declares the “fruits of the Spirit (which fruits are enjoyed by those who are ‘led by the Spirit,’ in which he obviously places religion) to be *love, joy, peace,*” &c.*

But can you, Sir, form any idea of *fear, love, joy, or peace*, or of any of the other passions or affections, apart from “inward feelings?” *Unfelt* fear, *unfelt* love, *unfelt* joy, *unfelt* peace, &c. are things of which my mind can form no more conception than of an oblong square, or a triangular circle. They imply an *unconscious consciousness*, which is a palpable contradiction, and therefore impossible. Destroy feeling, and you annihilate them all. But if these are essential to religion, to annihilate them is *totally* to annihilate religion.

But “this fatal doctrine of feelings,” it seems, pro-

* Gal. v. 22, 23.

duces the most baneful effects, and such as are “no where recorded in the scriptures of God, nor in any genuine history of true religion.” That the “doctrine of inward feelings” is recorded in “the scriptures” is a fact which no sophistry can overturn. Penitents sorrowed for sin after a Godly manner.* Believers enjoyed peace with God †—were blest with the Spirit of adoption ‡—were comforted in all their tribulation §—possessed the seal of the Spirit ¶—and rejoiced in hope of the glory of God.‡ When exhorted to an examination of themselves in order to the ascertaining of their real character, the reference was to (what you would denominate, “inward feelings”) Christ within ;** for, according to the doctrine of St. Paul, except a man had the spirit of Christ, he was none of his.††

But if the doctrine of feelings were right *then*, unless it can be proved that Christianity is radically changed, it must be right *now*. For if Christianity be unalterable in its character, its requisitions and privileges must remain the same in all generations. Repentance and faith are always obligatory, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost will in all ages be enjoyed by those who “by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus are made free from the law of sin and death.”††

But what are those effects produced by this doctrine of which neither “the scriptures nor any genuine his-

* 2 Cor. vii. 9. † Rom. v. 1. ‡ Rom. viii. 15. § 2 Cor. i. 4.

¶ Ephes. i. 13. † Rom. v. 2. ** 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

†† Rom. viii. 9. ‡† Rom. viii. 2.

tory of true religion," furnishes a parallel? These you divide into two classes—*Despair* and *Presumption*. Evidences of the former are, "falling down instantaneously—rolling on the ground—and groaning in agonies." And are you quite certain that these cannot be paralleled in "the scriptures?" Did not Saul of Tarsus, when in his way to Damascus, *instantaneously* fall, and fall even to the ground? * And does not St. Paul plainly intimate such effects to have been produced by the prophesying, or teaching, of Christians in the church at Corinth? "If, says he, "all prophecy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so FALLING DOWN on his face, he will worship God." † These, I grant, were extraordinary cases. So also were those to which you refer. But simply their being extraordinary will never prove that they were not of God; on the contrary, if in their subsequent conduct they brought forth the fruits of righteousness, their extraordinary character affords a strong presumption that they were effects of *His* power, who "alone doeth great wonders." ‡

On the *groaning in agonies* of penitent offenders, I refer you to the book of Psalms, where you may find abundance of parallels.

But it seems that the "doctrine of inward feelings" in its evil operation does not end here, but that it also produces *madness*. In a Note § you say, "The num-

* Acts ix. 4. † 2 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. ‡ Psal. cxxxvi. 4.
§ Page 17.

bers driven to madness by these doctrines are well known to be prodigious, and the fact is particularly testified by all medical men attending insane persons." " *They are well known to be prodigious !*" By whom, Sir ? Do *you* know them to be prodigious ? If they are so numerous and well known, why not refer to some seventy or eighty cases, and not deal in loose generalities ? That some of those who professed to love and fear God (and they could neither fear nor love God without inward feeling) have been the subjects of that great malady, *mental* derangement, will not be denied ; but that the number of these is prodigious, or that these cases originated in the doctrine which you reprobate, requires something more than confident assertion to establish. Pardon me, Sir, if in sacred deference to truth, I flatly contradict the concluding part of your Note. You say " the fact is testified by *all* medical men attending insane persons." Now, Sir, " the fact is," I have known *medical men* who attended insane persons that would *not* admit the fact.

I was sorry to see the name of the amiable Cowper introduced in this part of your charge, not only because it is impossible for an admirer of the TASK to recollect the malady with which its excellent author was afflicted, without a degree of gloom ; but also on another account. You ascribe his sufferings to the Methodist " doctrine of feelings." But are you sure that you are correct in so doing ? Did you never hear that he was the subject of *melancholy derangement* before he knew any thing of Methodists or Methodism ?

Now suppose it should turn out to be the fact that, antecedently to his acquaintance with Methodism, he was actually the subject of *melancholy derangement*, then it will undeniably follow, beyond the possibility of successful contradiction, that his derangement cannot be ascribed to *Methodism*—neither to *Arminian*, nor *Calvinistic Methodism*. And should it appear that you were acquainted with this fact, what are we to think of your candour in ascribing his malady to a cause which only had a subsequent existence?

I shall now state what I know of the subject, which will furnish you with an opportunity of correcting the mistake, if it be one. A gentleman, on whose veracity I can depend, informed me a few days ago that after you had delivered your charge at Walsall, an aged and venerable clergyman who had been intimate with the amiable Poet, spoke to you on the subject, and stated (I believe on his own knowledge) that before he had the least acquaintance with Methodism, he had been the subject of *melancholy derangement*. Now, supposing this statement to be correct, is it not a pity that you should deliberately attempt to mislead the public mind? Surely instead of saying with Pilate, “What I have written I have written,” it would have been much more consistent with the character of a Christian minister to expunge the paragraph.

Mental derangement proceeds not from religious, but physical causes, and may in most cases be traced to the unrestrained indulgence of appetite—the mortifications of love—ambition and avarice—the total annihilation of worldly prospects; or, to use the language

of an apostle, to the *sorrow of the world which worketh death.**

But this "fatal doctrine of feelings" produces *presumption* as well as *despair*. Hence you inform us of some who suddenly "received the gift of God, and were happy," and who declared "themselves converted." By the "gift of God," I suppose is meant the *peace of God*. If so, I ask, what is there wrong here? Surely you will not deny, *you* who so frequently pray that the "*peace of God which passeth all understanding may keep the hearts and minds*" of your people—surely *you* will not deny the possibility of obtaining such a "gift." And if it may be obtained, why not *suddenly*? Is it incredible that he who said to the winds and waves be still, and instantly there was a calm, should also by his sacred influences suddenly produce a holy calm in the souls of those who seek his mercy with "weeping, lamentation and woe?" Instead of being incredible that divine peace should be received *suddenly*, it is capable of demonstration that it cannot possibly be received otherwise; for there must be a *moment* in which the soul that before was destitute of peace becomes its happy subject: or, in other words, there must be a particular time in which servile fear gives place to Christian confidence; and the pains of repentance to the peace and joy of faith.

And if they really obtained peace, or, as you express it, "received the gift of God," where was the impropriety of making it known? You perhaps think

* 2 Cor. vii. 10.

it would have been better to evince their conversion by the holiness of their lives. To this I have no objection. Yet, if their practice did not contradict their profession, I cannot, in the particular cases referred to by Mr. W., see any rational ground of objection to their modestly declaring that they were "converted from the error of their ways," and "had passed from death unto life." But were it even admitted that such conduct was indecorous, irregular, and disorderly, it certainly did not merit such harsh epithets as those of "enthusiasm, quackery, and imposture."

To the triumphant end of malefactors you strongly object. I fear with you, Sir, that not only some of these, but many others deceive themselves by false hopes. Death-bed penitents and gallows penitents, in my estimation, are equally doubtful characters; nor do I believe that God "continually gives to the most depraved individuals, those miraculous intimations, that foretaste of approaching bliss, which we know him to have given sometimes to saints and martyrs:" neither can I believe that "poor wretches, on the suggestions of Methodistical teachers, go to their death rejoicing, perhaps, even in the crimes which rendered them unfit for human society; as if those very offences had indirectly made them fit for the society of angels, and of the souls of just men made perfect." Sir, I have known many more "Methodistical teachers" than you ever knew, but I *never knew one* who thought that God continually gives, to the most depraved individuals, the foretaste of approaching bliss"—*who* suggested that criminals were to "rejoice in their crimes"—or

that their offences qualified them for "the society of angels;" nor do I believe that such a "Methodistical teacher" ever existed, notwithstanding the bold assertions of Dr. Valpy and the Rev. the Archdeacon of Stafford. No, Sir: the charge of saying, "Peace peace," where there ought to be no peace, belongs to another order of men, with whom you are much better acquainted—men who do not hesitate to absolve from their sins the vilest debauchees in their parishes, and to administer to them, a little before their exit, (what has frequently been called a *passport to heaven*) the sacred emblems of the body and blood of Christ.

But although I cannot admit without evidence that such "Methodistical teachers" ever existed, yet I will not deny that among the vast multitude of Methodists there have been some enthusiasts, who have formed a false estimate of their character, and have both spoken and acted extravagantly. But this will no more prove that the Methodistical doctrine of inward feelings is dangerous, than that the doctrine of justification by faith is dangerous, because some "turned the grace of God into lasciviousness," and said, "Let us sin, that grace may abound." Nor can it with any more candour be traced to the influence of Methodistical teachers, than the treachery of Judas to the influence of the Redeemer; or the innumerable public executions of the members of the church of England to the influence of the established clergy.

The Bible, and not inward feelings, is the pole star of the Methodists: to this they "take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place:" by this they try their

feelings whether they are of God : here they behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image ; and here contemplating the astonishing privileges of the dispensation of the Spirit—peace with God—joy in the Holy Ghost—the Spirit of adoption—the earnest of the inheritance—communion with the Father and the Son—and a lively hope of a blessed immortality, they are by a gracious influence elevated to their enjoyment. Agreeably to the doctrine of our Lord, having done his will, they know by blessed experience that the doctrine is of God.

That the blessings of the dispensation of the Spirit may be increasingly enjoyed by Christians of every denomination, is the earnest prayer of,

Reverend Sir,

Your's in the cause of truth,

J. STANLEY.

LETTER V.

REFEREND SIR,

It appears that the "fatal doctrine of feelings" "arose out of another erroneous opinion, in which the rival apostles of Methodism (Wesley and Whitfield) agreed; namely, their exaggerated opinion of the depravity of human nature. With them, a robber or a murderer was not at all worse than any other human being not converted to their mode of saintship. They spoke of human creatures in general, as if their Maker and Creator had been the Evil Spirit, rather than God. They interpreted the words of our ninth Article in their strongest and most harsh sense, as if every person born was worthy of the worst species of eternal punishment in hell."* Where or when they taught such opinions you have not condescended to inform us; but why you have not done so it is not for me to say: only I would just remark, that you either *did* or did *not* know that they had taught such opinions. If you knew that they had, why not quote, or at least refer to the passages in which they are taught? This would have been perfectly satisfactory. But as you have not done this, the presumption is, that you were conscious of your utter inability to produce any such passage. It is but the too common practice of some writers to substitute declamation for argument, and confident assertion for proof.

* Page 20.

That they believed in the depravity of human nature their works abundantly prove, especially Mr. Wesley's celebrated Answer to Dr. Taylor's "Doctrine of Original Sin." A work in which he demonstrates, both from scripture and matter of fact, that man is a fallen creature—fallen from knowledge and virtue; that we are born in sin and shapen in iniquity;—that by nature we are children of wrath, and that the thoughts and imaginations of the hearts of the unregenerate are evil, only evil, and that continually. With the ninth Article he places human depravity, not in the "following of Adam," but in the radical corruption of human nature; for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.* To assert that this is an "exaggerated" statement "of the depravity of human nature" is easy, but to prove it is quite another thing. That all have sinned the scriptures positively assert; but if all have sinned, all are depraved. To deny this would be to admit the production of an effect without a cause; which is a contradiction, and absolutely impossible. But if all are depraved, whence is this depravity? We are sometimes told that we derive this moral contagion from without—from the example of the ungodly. But this will never satisfactorily account for *universal* depravity. For if men become sinners through the influence of example *only*, is it not remarkable that some (say five in an age) do not escape the general contagion? Whereas none escape;

* Matt. xv. 19.

for "there is *none* righteous, no, *NOT ONE*. Besides, if men become sinners through the influence of example *only*, it will follow that they commit no sin which they have not known committed by others. For to suppose them guilty of any sin which they have not known committed by others, and at the same time to affirm that they are sinners by example *only*, is a direct contradiction, and consequently impossible: it is equal to saying, they *are* sinners by example, and are *not* sinners by example at the same time. It seems utterly impossible to account for the *universal* prevalence of sin on any other principle than the *radical* depravity of human nature. But let this be admitted, and we can at once trace universal criminality to an adequate cause. The fountain being impure, the streams issuing from thence must participate in its impurity.

But it seems that "their opinion of the depravity of human nature" was "exaggerated." In proof of which you assert that "with them a robber or a murderer was not at all worse than any other human being;" and that they spoke of the Creator of men as if he were "the Evil Spirit, rather than God." Yet you have not furnished your readers with a single passage in proof of either of these charges. And why? The reason is obvious—no such passage exists. Mr. Wesley especially taught that by nature every man is a child of wrath,—that from an evil heart proceeds evil works, and that the soul that sinneth is exposed to eternal death; or with the apostle James he declared—"He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all."

Yet he no where maintains that all are *equally* guilty; or exposed to an equality of punishment. All have sinned, but not in the same degree. He taught as the scriptures do, that there are different gradations in vice, and different degrees in punishment; but no where did he teach that honest and benevolent men are as wicked as robbers and murderers, or that the punishment of a moral man, but who lives in the neglect of salvation, will be equal to that of Judas. He had read and believed that—"that servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with *many* stripes: but he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with *few* stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required."*

But, you say, he represented the Creator of men as an "Evil Spirit, rather than God." I am sorry, Sir, that a Christian minister, more especially a dignitary in the Christian church, should so confidently assert what is not only unsupported by the shadow of proof, but is in direct opposition to the voluminous writings of that venerable man, which are in the possession of many hundreds, if not thousands of the inhabitants of this nation. It is true that he represents the creature as evil, full of evil; but, instead of ascribing that evil to the Creator, he affirms again and again that

"Evil from God cannot proceed;"

* Luke xii. 47, 48.

and traces it to the *voluntary and unnecessitated* transgression of man. Nor does he trace moral evil only, but natural evil also to the same cause. "The world at the beginning," he says, "was in a totally different state, from that wherein we find it now. Object therefore whatever you please to the present state, either of the animate, or inanimate creation, whether in general, or with regard to any particular instances, and the answer is ready: these are not now as they were in the beginning.—He made no corruption, no destruction in the inanimate creation. He made no death in the animal creation, *neither its harbingers, sin and pain.* It was only

*Post ignem æthereæ domo
Subductum,*

that is, in plain English, after man, in utter defiance of his Maker, had eaten of the tree of knowledge, that

*Macies et nova febrium
Terris incubuit cohors :*

that a whole army of evils, totally new, totally unknown till then, broke in upon rebel man, and all other creatures, and overspread the face of the earth."

Again he observes that "Evil did not exist at all in the original nature of things. All things then, without exception, were very good. And how should they be otherwise? There was no defect at all in the

power of God, any more than in his goodness or wisdom. His goodness inclined him to make all things good : and this was executed by his power and wisdom.

“ *God made man upright, and every creature perfect in its kind, but man found out to himself many inventions ; and by his apostacy from God, threw not only himself, but likewise the whole creation, into disorder, misery, death.*”*

Is this, Sir, representing the Creator of men as “the Evil Spirit rather than God?” Yet such was the manner in which Mr. Wesley uniformly spoke of the great Creator.

What you mean by interpreting the “ words of the ninth Article in their strongest and most harsh sense,” I do not understand. The title of the Article is descriptive of its character, and the article itself is expressed in terms so explicit and appropriate, that, be the doctrine true or false, nothing can be more obvious than that it teaches that the heart of every man born into the world is *corrupt—naturally inclined to evil, and deserving God’s wrath and damnation*. Thus it was understood by the founders of Methodism—thus it is understood by many of the clergy and laity of the church of England—thus it is understood by the orthodox dissenters, and thus also it is understood by those dissenters who deny original sin. How Socinian churchmen understand and interpret this article I do not pretend to know ; but suppose they may explain it in its *weakest*

* Wesley’s Works, vol. 9. p. 140—142. 8vo. Edit.

and most *mild* sense. Or what will be yet more complete, reject its doctrine altogether, and subscribe it only as an article of peace.

Mr. Wesley uniformly preached the doctrines of the church of England ; in proof of which I refer you to the 135 Sermons which are published in his works ; and for preaching these doctrines with much earnestness and plainness, and for *no other reason*, he was “ excluded from the churches.” Those, therefore, who excluded him were, to say the least, inconsistent members of the church of England ; and their “ prohibitions” are, and will be reviewed with abhorrence, and severely censured by every true churchman ; that is, by every one who cordially believes and loves the articles and liturgy of the church of England.

But it seems they did wrong in “ collecting congregations of their own from the bosom of other men’s cures.” Yes, this was robbery, downright robbery !!! Let us see how the case stands. England and Wales are divided, say, into 18,000 parishes, in each of which a clergyman is supposed to reside, for the purpose of performing spiritual cures. Some of these parishes contain from 10 to 20,000 people, each of whom is morally diseased, and needs the aid of the parish spiritual physician. What can *one* man do in such a parish ? Were he as much concerned for the salvation of sinners as St. Paul himself, he would find it utterly impossible to attend to such a number of cases. Hundreds, thousands of them must necessarily be neglected. But suppose the parish physician should happen either to be ignorant of the state of the people, or

utterly unconcerned about them.—Suppose that, instead of preaching the word *in season and out of season*, and *watching over his people as one who must give an account*, he were to spend his time at balls and assemblies—at theatres and masquerades—in the chase—on the race ground—or at the tavern; then the whole parish, for him at least, must remain in their sins, and in constant danger of perishing for lack of knowledge. Now what I have supposed has in very many instances been the case. And shall the man of God, who is burning with zeal for the salvation of his fellow sinners, refuse to administer counsel to these neglected and perishing souls, because, forsooth, he is not the person appointed to receive the parish tythes? Such a sentiment is the legitimate offspring of prejudice, and completely at variance with the benevolent spirit and design of the gospel of Christ.

They, like you, Sir, believed themselves called of God to preach the gospel. Their commission was to preach the gospel to every creature. This commission they had from him to whom all creatures belong, and for whose salvation he had shed his blood—and who had said—“One is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren.”* In matters of religion they owned no other. Where they could, consistently with their duty to Christ and his church, they conformed to the will of those whom you call “their lawful and spiritual governors;” but where both could not be accomplished, they never hesitated whether to obey God or

* Matt. xxiii. 8.

man. They acted like protestants. Luther, and all the reformers, acted on the same principle. But your argument is popery unmasked. To convince you of which, let us suppose that Dr. Milner, for instance, were attempting a defence of the church of Rome, in her conduct towards Luther and Melancthon, and the rest of the reformed ministers: Could he do better than adopt your language?—“*We deny then with reason the necessity which could urge LUTHER and MELANCTHON to preach such doctrines as these; and if they were excluded from the churches for preaching them, we cannot in justice pass any censure on those (the pope, &c.) who issued the prohibitions. When they had been so excluded, nothing could justify them, as men regularly ordained, for preaching without authority. Still less can any thing excuse them for collecting congregations of their own from the bosom of other men’s cures, for forming new ordinances, (or what is much the same, modifying some old ones, and totally rejecting others) and a peculiar species of discipline, out of the church; and in direct defiance of the authority of all those (the pope, &c.) who were their lawful and spiritual governors. Either the church of God (or which is evidently the same thing, the church of Rome) is something holy, or it is not. If, as we (popes, cardinals, archbishops, and vicars apostolic) have been taught to believe, the ecclesiastical authority of (popes and) bishops, be in truth derived from the appointment of Christ and his apostles, they who resist it, (and clergymen more particularly) offend against the ordinance of God.*”*

* Luke xii. 47, 48.

In your zeal against "Sectaries" you have exposed yourself to certain defeat by any Roman Catholic polemic, whenever he shall think proper to attack you. Indeed he may obtain the city without warfare; for you have left it in pursuit of Wesley, Whitfield, and others, and in your haste have forgotten either to shut or guard its gates. He may walk in, sit down quietly, and rejoice in a bloodless triumph.

You indeed admit that between these "enthusiasts," Wesley and Whitfield, and "our Saviour and his inspired and beloved followers," there is at least *one* "strong point of resemblance;" namely, *itinerancy*. "Our Saviour and his apostles went about preaching the gospel in public places;"* so also did Wesley and Whitfield. Yet even this was wrong. It is very difficult to please some gentlemen: they

"wince at every touch:

"You either do too little or too much."

At one time we are told the discipline of the church of England "is derived from the practice and appointment of the apostles," and that "no reasonable person can admit of a commission to disobey or disturb that discipline, under a less evidence than that of miracles."† And very soon after we are informed that Wesley and Whitfield were enthusiasts for strongly resembling the apostles. If they depart from the *practice* of the apostles, they "cease to be members of

* Page 23, 24. † Page 11.

Christ's body," and "incur a hazard, which every prudent, and much more every pious person, should be careful to avoid;" and if they imitate that practice, they "assume the manner of apostles," and in "the paroxysms of their enthusiasm" think themselves the subjects of a "divine call." Whether they *do* or do *not* imitate the practice of the apostles, they are equally wrong.

The argument by which you attempt the demolition of itinerancy, will, if it prove any thing, demolish the church of England. "Did they ever read," you ask, "or hear, or understand, that our Saviour or any one apostle, constituted or designated itinerancy as a permanent condition of gospel teachers? Is it not as certain as historical testimony can make it, and even the witness of inspired history, that in all places, where converts were made, every apostle appointed fixed and settled ministers?" And I ask, Did *you* ever read, or hear, or understand, that our Saviour, or any one apostle, constituted or designated the hierarchy of the church of England as a permanent condition of gospel teachers? Is it not as certain as historical testimony can make it, and even the witness of inspired history, that in no place, where converts were made, did any apostle at any time appoint archbishops, deans, archdeacons, &c. ministers in the Christian church? It is also worthy of notice that whilst there is not the shadow of probability that any of these orders existed in the apostolical church; we are sure there were itinerants.

Besides, Sir, in the Methodist itinerant are united

the offices of pastor and evangelist. He, it is true, preaches the gospel in a great variety of places : on an average, perhaps, to ten or twelve congregations in two years. Among these he preaches from six to eight times every week. He regularly visits the sick of the several societies under his care, besides many sick members of the church of England who, strange as it may seem, when they find themselves going the *way of all flesh*, not unfrequently send for him in preference to their own ministers. In addition to which he converses with the several members of those societies once a quarter, at least, on the subject of Christian experience. As an evangelist, or missionary, he raises Christian societies; and as a settled pastor, he *edifies the body of Christ*.

That the Redeemer's kingdom may be enlarged and built up by the united efforts of ministers of every denomination, is the earnest prayer of,

Reverend Sir,

Your's in the cause of truth,

J. STANLEY.

LETTER VI.

REVEREND SIR,

HAVING already exceeded the limits which I had prescribed to myself, I should have terminated my remarks with the last Letter : but on reviewing your charge, I perceived one point which I have not yet noticed ; a point which, though notoriously incorrect, and therefore not likely to injure any who are acquainted with the Bible, yet possibly may do harm to those readers who, unlike the noble Bereans, do not search the scriptures, to see whether the thing is so.

The point referred to is on page 28. " Did the truly inspired teachers," you ask, " ever thunder out hell and damnation to those who refused to be converted?" If they did not, they were unfaithful in the execution of that commission which they had received of the Lord. " Go ye," said Jesus, " into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that *believeth not shall be damned.*"* According to this commission they were bound to " thunder out hell and damnation to those who refused to be converted ;" for to refuse to believe in Christ is, to all intents and purposes, to refuse to be converted.

But although this commission is exceedingly plain, yet it seems that "neither the gospel, nor any other part

* Mark xvi. 15, 16.

of the scripture, gives us any example" of such kind of preaching. To the law and the testimony. What saith the scriptures? "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida!" Why? Because they "refused to be converted;" "for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes."* "These mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."† "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."‡ "I said unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."§ "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."§ "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be *damned* who believe not the truth."¶ "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."**

To quote all the passages of scripture which directly or by the most obvious implication, "thunder out

* Matt. xi. 21. † Luke xix. 27. ‡ John iii. 36.

§ John viii. 24. § 2 Thess. i. 7—9. ¶ 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.

** John xviii. 3.

hell and damnation to those who refuse to be converted," would far exceed the limits of this letter. And as the apostles were not like those who *corrupt the word of God*, but spoke *according to the divine oracles*, we may fairly conclude that, "knowing the terrors of the Lord, they persuaded men," not only by the hope of heaven, but also by the fear of hell. The scriptures abound with a variety of motives to piety, admirably adapted to the different passions. One addresses our love—another our fear—a third our hope, and so on. And shall we with sacrilegious hands destroy either the one or the other of these? God forbid. We need the aid of all. Let that be destroyed which you reprobate, and, in the opinion of a late eminent man, whose judgment you will respect, your labours among the multitude will in general be without effect. I refer to Dr. Johnson. On Boswell's making some observations on the success of the Methodists, the Dr. said, "Sir, it is owing to their expressing themselves in a plain and familiar manner, which is the only way to do good to the common people, and which the clergymen of genius and learning ought to do from a principle of duty, when it is suited to their congregations: a practice for which they will be praised by men of sense. To insist against drunkenness as a crime, because it degrades reason, the noblest faculty of man, would be of no service to the common people: but to tell them that they may die in a fit of drunkenness, and shew them how dreadful that would be, cannot fail to make a deep impression."*

* Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, vol. 1. p. 435. 8vo. Edit.

Let it not however be supposed that the venerable founders of Methodism always dealt in the terrible. No: they taught "every man in all wisdom." They varied their manner of teaching according to the supposed state of their hearers. Where the knife and the caustic were necessary, they used them; and where the Balm of Gilead was wanted, they poured it in. Now they were sons of thunder, then sons of consolation. At one time they would take their stand as on Mount Sinai, from whence they proclaimed the divine law, and pronounced the transgressors accursed; and at another time they would stand as on Mount Zion, uttering the invitations and promises of the gospel. Nor were they ever more in their element, than when preaching "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Christ, and him crucified, formed the grand theme of their ministry; and to win souls to Christ was their ceaseless object. And did they labour in vain? Let facts *speak*—Let the hordes of miners in Somersetshire, Staffordshire and Northumberland, who through their ministry were raised from the depths of moral and mental degradation, *speak*—let the conversion of thousands of the middle ranks of the community from sin to holiness, *speak*—let the increased attention to religion which, in the last as well as in the present century, was visible both among dissenters and in the church of England, *speak*—let some of the best ornaments of the Christian ministry, both in and out of the established church, of the former as well as the present age, *speak*—let the prisoner, the stranger, the afflicted, and the dying, *speak*—let thou-

sands of Negroes in the West Indies, who, through the ministry of the Methodists, have been raised to the liberty and dignity of children of God, *speak*—let Benevolent Societies and Sunday Schools—*speak*. Sir, the extent of their usefulness will never be fully known till the arrival of that day when every man's work will be made manifest : for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire ; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."†

One thing more I must not omit. In the course of your charge, you very often remind your readers, that the clergy of the church of England are the *successors* of the apostles, on which you affect to be very serious, and on which you plume yourself not a little. That which is a serious subject to some people, is a very ludicrous one to others.* If by a successor of the apostles you mean one who follows the apostles in or-

† 1 Cor. iii. 13.

* At the reformation, when England and Scotland separated themselves, or made the great schism from the Romish church, disputes ran high on the mode of governing the new societies, whether by presbyters without bishops, or by bishops with presbyters. The church of England contended, that the parent church retained the ancient mode of government from the time of the apostles, and bishops were consequently a *SINE QUA NON* in the church. They were also indispensably necessary, because the priests and deacons could be invested with certain powers only by bishops, and these bishops could not confer that power, unless they had received the power of conferring the power from mouth to mouth in regular succession down from one of the apostles. Unfortunately for the church of England, the only ladder by which she could climb to the throne of an apostle was in the possession of the church of Rome, who in very civil language told her, that the ladder was indeed at Rome situated on a rock ; but, in somewhat rude terms, assured her that she should never set her foot on the lowest step of it, unless she previously kissed the toe of his holiness. On the other hand, the kirk, under no concern about this ladder, endeavours to soothe her sister : my dear lady, says she, why do you so distress yourself about a trifle. Don't you remember, when we were girls, and

der of time, why, so is every body of the present generation. But if you mean, as no doubt you do, that clergymen, in virtue of episcopal ordination, are qualified for the ministry, and are their successors in *office*, why then you assert what I dare stake my salvation upon, neither you, nor archbishop Potter, nor E. Barwick, nor bishop Skinner, nor archdeacon Daubeney, nor any other Reverend, or Very Reverend, or Right Reverend, will ever be able to prove. Many popes and bishops have been notoriously depraved men; "but unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth?"* On supposition, therefore, that there were certain occult virtues in episcopal ordination, by which a stream of ministerial qualities, (which has been running ever since the time of the apostles through the Greek and Roman, and all other

lived at home with this strange mother of ours, we used to play about this ladder; but it was fit for nothing but child's play. You climbed higher than I did, and one day got two-thirds of the way up to the top. I shall never forget it, as long as I live, for I strained my neck in looking after you, and never expected to see you alive upon the ground again. On coming down, what an account you gave me! At one place several steps were missing, at another there were only knobs on the side on which you could scarcely lay hold or set your foot, and at last you were so giddy, that you could not see whether the ladder reached to the top of the tower or not. The people too, who shewed this ladder as a curiosity, used to laugh in their sleeves, and to tell me privately, that they never knew any body get into the castle that way; and it had been handed down to them, that the highest step in the ladder was not within half a dozen yards of the top of the wall. Besides, though climbing ladders might do very well for a girl, only consider, if you could now even get to the foot of the ladder, which is clearly impossible, what a figure you would make half way up in the air with your petticoats flying about you? Really, my dear sister, you would be the laugh of the whole neighbourhood.

Frend's Letters to Bishop Pretymann.

* Psalm l. 16

episcopal churches) is usually communicated to ministers who are episcopally ordained, which, by the way, I do not admit, yet it is in the highest degree incredible that wicked ministers, who are prohibited by God from declaring his statutes, should be the medium of that communication. Now should this be the case, it will follow that every ordination of such a bishop, and of all *his* successors, is to all intents and purposes invalid. And if so, according to your views of the subject, their ministry is not only ineffectual, but they are in danger of sharing the fate of "Uzziah, the Kohathites, and Corah and his confederates."*

From this view of the subject, in what an awful state of uncertainty must be the advocates for apostolical succession? Without a divine revelation, it will be as easy to find out the different tribes of Israel among the present race of Jews, as to ascertain who among the present race of ministers of the church of England are the legitimate successors of the apostles. The fact is, the doctrine of apostolical succession is a mere fiction of popery, which has recently been adopted by some of the English clergy, who, like papists, are desirous of confining salvation to their own community.

In conclusion, Sir, permit me to ask, Why are you so zealous against the sectaries? What evil have they done? Are they enemies to civil government? No: they are good and loyal subjects, and give many proofs of their love both to their king and country.

Are they enemies to religion and morality? No: they are zealous, and, in thousands of cases, successful in promoting both. Are they hostile to benevolence? No: in general they are *ready to every good work*. Do they envy the clergy of the church of England their tythes, and stalls, and mitres? Not they. None of these things move them. They covet neither their silver nor gold, but wish to pass on their way without interruption. They court—they desire no favour. Like Diogenes, when asked by Alexander the Great what he should do for him, they simply say—*Stand out of our sunshine*.

Instead, Sir, of calumniating the sectaries, and endeavouring to rouse the clergy against what you consider fanaticism, would it not be much better to direct their attention to the universal suppression of vice, which awfully prevails? I can assure you that the inhabitants of your archdeaconry are very far from being “righteous overmuch.” On the contrary, they are, at least the mass of them, “overmuch wicked.” But whether you will interest yourself in the suppression of vice or not, let me beseech you to abstain from calumniating the sectaries. If you think by opposing them you shall promote the interests of the established church, you are under a strong delusion. “Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it: lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.”*

* Acts v. 38, 39.

Sincerely praying that the zeal of Christians may be universally directed to proper objects ; and that after the present shadowy state of existence, in which diversity of opinion too frequently generates feelings which but ill accord with the benevolent spirit of the gospel, shall have vanished away, they may all meet in their Father's house, where the voice of discord shall never be heard,

I remain,

Reverend Sir,

Your's in the cause of truth,

J. STANLEY.

Lately published, and sold by the same Author,

Sold also by J. Booth, Wednesbury; Blanshard, 14, City Road, London; Peart, Birmingham; Maurice, Dudley; and Lomax, Lichfield. 2nd Edit. Price 1s.

NATHAN NEWMAN'S

"RELIGION RUN WILD,"

&c. &c.

SERIOUSLY EXAMINED,

IN SIX LETTERS,

BY OBADIAH:

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A SPEECH,

DELIVERED AT THE FORMATION OF THE

DUDLEY AUXILIARY BIBLE SOCIETY,

APRIL, 1812.





